



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Director of Health Services

At its meeting held March 9, 2004, the Board took the following action:

38-D

Supervisor Burke made the following statement:

“Over the past several months King/Drew Medical Center has been under intense scrutiny for its management of patient care. Most recently, this attention has focused on medication errors at the hospital.

“All too often these types of problems result in finger-pointing among clinicians as to who is truly responsible for patient care, rather than ownership and solutions to the problem. While the direct day-to-day delivery of medications is the responsibility of pharmacy and nursing staff, ultimately it is the doctor who is responsible for the quality of care provided. However, it appears that, traditionally, physicians have not played an active day-to-day role in following the delivery of pharmaceuticals to patients once they have written the medication order. As the primary health care professional responsible for a patient’s course of care, doctors can and should play an active role in overseeing the administration of these medications.

“In this instance, King/Drew Medical Center has taken an aggressive approach to reviewing the roles of all members of the patient care team, doctors, nurses, and pharmacists, and developing new policies and procedures that ensure that each one is held accountable for the competent management of medication therapy, and ultimately the delivery of patient care. This includes holding doctors accountable for ensuring their treatment instructions for patients are properly followed. I am pleased King/Drew Medical Center has taken steps to significantly strengthen the checks and balances associated with monitoring this critical aspect of patient care.

(Continued on Page 2)

38-D (Continued)

“While attention has been focused on King/Drew Medical Center, medication errors occur far too frequently in the hospital environment. For this reason, it is important that the Department of Health Services conduct a review of the care processes and responsibilities at all of its hospitals and clinics to ensure that all clinical staff are held accountable to actively participate in the management of patient care.”

Genevieve Clavreul addressed the Board.

After discussion, on motion of Supervisor Burke, seconded by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, unanimously carried (Supervisor Knabe being absent), the Director of Health Services was instructed to review and make any necessary changes to clinical protocols and procedures related to medication management to ensure that responsibilities are clearly delineated and fully integrated among all responsible clinical staff, doctors, nurses and pharmacists; and report back to the Board within 30 days on the result of the review and actions taken to achieve improved integration of medication management among all responsible clinical staff.

8030904-38-D

Copies distributed:

Each Supervisor
Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel